**IN THE CLAIMS:**

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 17 and 19-21 and CANCEL claim 18 in accordance with the following:

1-16. (CANCELLED)

17. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A system using ATM cells each including an ATM header, which includes VPI and channel identification information, and a payload subsequent to the ATM header, comprising:

means for outputting a first ATM cell and a second ATM cell, each ATM cell including an ATM header and communication information of a channel in a part of a payload;

means for inputting the first ATM cell and the second ATM cell and extracting the ATM header and the communication information ~~from the payload~~ of the first ATM cell and the second ATM cell;

means for multiplexing the communication information, channel identification information of the communication information and information indicative of lengths of the communication information of the first ATM cell and the second ATM cell, ~~both of the ATM cells being transferred to a same node and having different channel identification information, into a payload of a new ATM cell~~the second ATM cell including a same VPI as a VPI of the first ATM cell and including different channel identification information than the channel identification information of the first ATM cell, into a new payload of a new ATM cell including a new ATM header and the new payload, the new ATM header including the VPI and the channel identification information of the first ATM cell, the new payload including a combination of the channel identification information of the communication information and the information indicative of lengths of the communication information, together with the communication information, of the first ATM cell and the second ATM cell; and

means for outputting the new ATM cell.

18. (CANCELLED)

19. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A multiplexing device in a system using ATM cells, each including an ATM header, which includes VPI and channel identification information, and a payload subsequent to the ATM header, the system including means for outputting a first ATM cell and a second ATM cell, each ATM cell including an ATM header and communication information of a channel in a part of a payload, the multiplexing device comprising:

means for inputting the first ATM cell and the second ATM cell and extracting the ATM header and the communication information ~~from the payload~~ of each of the first ATM cell and the second ATM cell;

means for multiplexing the communication information, channel identification information of the communication information and information indicative of lengths of the communication information of the first ATM cell and the second ATM cell, ~~both of the ATM cells being transferred to a same node and having different channel identification information, into a payload of a new ATM cell~~the second ATM cell including a same VPI as a VPI of the first ATM cell and including different channel identification information than the channel identification information of the first ATM cell, into a new payload of a new ATM cell including a new ATM header and the new payload, the new ATM header including the VPI and the channel identification information of the first ATM cell, the new payload including a combination of the channel identification information of the communication information and the information indicative of lengths of the communication information, together with the communication information, of the first ATM cell and the second ATM cell; and

means for outputting the new ATM cell.

20. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method using ATM cells each including an ATM header, which includes VPI and channel identification information, and a payload subsequent to the ATM header, comprising:

outputting a first ATM cell and a second ATM cell, each including an ATM header and communication information of a channel in a part of a payload;

inputting the first ATM cell and the second ATM cell and extracting the ATM header and the communication information ~~from the payload~~ of each of the first ATM cell and the second ATM cell;

multiplexing the communication information, channel identification information of the communication information and information indicative of lengths of the communication information of the first ATM cell and the second ATM cell, ~~both of the ATM cells being transferred to a same node, into a payload of a new ATM cell~~the second ATM cell including a same VPI as a VPI of the first ATM cell and including different channel identification information than the

channel identification information of the first ATM cell, into a new payload of a new ATM cell including a new ATM header and the new payload, the new ATM header including the VPI and the channel identification information of the first ATM cell, the new payload including a combination of the channel identification information of the communication information and the information indicative of lengths of the communication information, together with the communication information, of the first ATM cell and the second ATM cell; and

outputting the new ATM cell.

21. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A system using ATM cells each including an ATM header, which includes VPI and channel identification information, and a payload subsequent to the ATM header, comprising:

a unit multiplexing communication information, channel identification information of the communication information and information indicative of lengths of the communication information of a first ATM cell and a second ATM cell, ~~both of the ATM cells being transferred to a same node and having different channel identification information, into a payload of a new ATM cell~~the second ATM cell including a same VPI as a VPI of the first ATM cell and including different channel identification information than the channel identification information of the first ATM cell, into a new payload of a new ATM cell including a new ATM header and the new payload, the new ATM header including the VPI and the channel identification information of the first ATM cell, the new payload including a combination of the channel identification information of the communication information and the information indicative of lengths of the communication information, together with the communication information, of the first ATM cell and the second ATM cell, and

a unit outputting the new ATM cell.